Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. Applicant/Contact name and address: John A. Stirling
Kathleen Q. Stirling
PO Box 1788
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit # 30051890-41F

3. Water source name: Groundwater

4. Location affected by project: NWSWSESW, Sec. 17, T12S, R05E, Gallatin County.

5. This application is to obtain a water right for a well located in the Yellowstone Controlled Groundwater Area (YCGA). Water is proposed to be diverted by means of a groundwater well from April 25 to October 5 annually at a rate of 15 gallons per minute (GPM) up to 5.0 acre-feet (AF), from a point in the NWSWSESW, Sec. 17, T12S, R05E, Gallatin County. This application is for 5.0 AF for lawn and garden use from April 25 to October 5. Water from this right will be associated to an existing domestic water right, 41F-110162. The water from this well measured 43.5 degrees Fahrenheit (F). The National Park Service was notified. If they do not object, a permit will be issued.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Natural Resource Program……..Species of Concern
US Fish and Wildlife Service……Wetlands Mapper
National Park Service……Water Resources Division

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity *- Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.*

Determination: No impacts identified
The source is groundwater.

Water quality *- Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.*

Determination: No impacts identified
The source of water is groundwater, not on the DEQ list.

Groundwater *- Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.*

Determination: No impacts identified
The well is unlikely to affect adjacent surface flows. The National Park Service has been contacted, per compact requirements. No impact identified.

DIVERSION WORKS - *Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.*

Determination: No impacts identified
The diversion is a 67 foot deep well, drilled by a licensed contractor. No identified impact to existing resources.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species *- Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

Determination: No impact identified
The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified species of concern. The Species of Concern Data Report identifies the Slender Indian Paintbrush, Mayfly, Cassin's Finch, Peregrine Falcon, Brewer's Sparrow, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Western Toad, Bald Eagle, Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, and the Bison inhabiting the project area. No impact identified.

Wetlands *- Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: No impacts identified
No wetlands exist in the area.

Ponds - *For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: Not applicable. This project does not include a pond.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

Determination: No impacts identified
There is no saline seep in this area.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Determination: No impacts identified
The disturbed areas have reclaimed themselves since construction. No impact identified.

AIR QUALITY - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

Determination: No impacts identified
There should be no significant impact to air quality from this development. No impact identified.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

Determination: *NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

Determination: No impacts identified
No anticipated additional impacts.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

Determination: No impact identified

The proposed project is not inconsistent with locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

Determination: No impacts identified
This well is drilled on private property.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

Determination: No impacts identified.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*
*Yes___ No_**X**__ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

Determination: No impacts identified

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

Impacts on:

(a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity?	No impacts identified
(b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues?	No impacts identified
(c) Existing land uses?	No impacts identified
(d) Quantity and distribution of employment?	No impacts identified
(e) Distribution and density of population and housing?	No impacts identified
(f) Demands for government services?	No impacts identified
(g) Industrial and commercial activity?	No impacts identified
(h) Utilities?	No impacts identified
(i) Transportation?	No impacts identified
(j) Safety?	No impacts identified
(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?	No impacts identified

2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*

Secondary Impacts No secondary impacts have been identified

Cumulative Impacts No cumulative impacts have been identified

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** Mitigation or stipulations are not planned at this time.

4. ***Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:***
The no action alternative is the only alternative to the proposed action. Under the no action alternative, the applicant would be unable to obtain a water right for the proposed multiple domestic and lawn and garden use.

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative:*** Obtain a water right for the proposed purpose.

2 ***Comments and Responses:*** None at this time.

3. ***Finding:***
*Yes___ No **X** Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?*

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: No reasonable alternatives identified.

None of the identified impacts for any of the alternatives is significant as defined in ARM 36.2.524

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Porter Dassenko
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: 9/29/2011